

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T TEL AVIV 6684

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAID, PBOR, JO, US, IS
SUBJECT: GOI RESPONSE TO MAQARIN DRAFT WORKING PAPER

REFS: (A) TEL AVIV 6350, (B) STATE 200965, (C) STATE 207975

1. SUMMARY: THE GOI BELIEVES THAT THE WORKING PAPER IS A GOOD BASIS FOR REACHING AGREEMENT ON MAQARIN. HOWEVER, THE ISRAELIS INSIST THAT DIRECT TECHNICAL CONTACTS WITH JORDANIANS WILL BE NECESSARY BEFORE CABINET-LEVEL ISRAELI APPROVAL FOR COOPERATION IS SOUGHT. END SUMMARY.

2. MOSHE ALON, DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTRY, BRIEFED THE E/C COUNSELOR ON SEPTEMBER 6 CONCERNING GOI PRELIMINARY REACTION TO THE MAQARIN WORKING PAPER. ALON SAID THAT "IN PRINCIPLE" THE WORKING PAPER WAS A GOOD BASIS FOR REACHING AGREEMENT. HIS OTHER MAIN POINTS WERE:

A. DISCUSSIONS ON ALLOCATION OF WATER FROM THE YARMOUK RIVER TO THE YARMOUK TRIANGLE SHOULD BE CENTERED ON 40 MCM BECAUSE PRESENT PEAK CONSUMPTION IS 51 MCM. TO SUPPLY 51 MCM A YEAR, THE GOI IS OBLIGED TO ADD PUMPING FROM THE GALILEE AND JORDAN (JORDAN WATERS ARE IN

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PRACTICE ALSO FROM GALILEE WHICH WILL LEAVE THE LAKE VIA DEGANIYA WEIR). YARMOUK WATERS WHICH COULD BE PUMPED DO NOT SATIDFY ACTUAL NEEDS. IT SHOULD BE NOTED ALSO THAT ISRAEL CANNOT DECREASE THE NEEDS OF THE REGION WHICH HAS A LONG TRADITION OF BANANA CULTIVATION. IN OTHER REGIONS THE CONSUMPTION IS LOWER. THIS WHOLE MATTER IS, OF COURSE, SUBJECT TO DISCUSSION.

B. CONCERNING THE AGREEMENT ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF A WEIR AT ADASIYE, THE GOI FEELS IT MUST INCLUDE ARRANGEMENTS FOR INSURING THE RELEASE OF THE AGREED QUANTITIES OF WATER. SUCH ARRANGEMENTS COULD BE MADE BY A JOINT WATER MASTER AUTHORITY.

C. ANY REVIEW OF NEEDS OF THE WEST BANK FOR WATER SHOULD BE INITIATED BY ISRAEL OR JOINTLY BY ISRAEL AND JORDAN.

D. PLANNING IN THE FIRST STAGE OF THE CONSTRUCTION OF MEANS OF CONVEYING EAST GHOR WATER TO THE WEST BANK SHOULD BE COMMENCED CONCURRENTLY WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE WEIR AT ADASIYE. THIS PLANNING SHOULD INCLUDE A TIMETABLE FOR CONSTRUCTION. THE MEANS OF CONVEYING COULD BE EITHER BY SIPHON OR SOME OTHER METHOD.

E. ISRAEL FEELS THAT A PERMANENT JOINT ISRAELI/JORDANIAN TECHNICAL COMMISSION SHOULD BE SET UP TO COORDINATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT.

F. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT ISRAEL AND JORDAN SIGN A WRITTEN AGREEMENT EMBODYING THE PRINCIPLES AND METHODS OF IMPLEMENTATION AGREED UPON

G. DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS AT THE TECHNICAL LEVEL SHOULD BE INITIATED AT ONCE.

3. ALON PROMISED TO PROVIDE US WITH A WRITTEN SUMMATION OF THESE POINTS WITHIN A FEW DAYS.

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4. IN THE DISCUSSION WHICH FOLLOWED, THE E/C COUNSELOR COMMENTED TO ALON THAT POINTS C, E, F, AND G MIGHT WELL CAUSE THE JORDANIANS REAL PROBLEMS. ALON WAS ADAMANT. HE SAID THAT THESE MATTERS COULD ALL BE DEALT WITH IN GREAT SECRECY. IF JORDAN HAD THE WILL, HE SAID, THE ARRANGEMENTS COULD BE WORKED OUT. FOR EXAMPLE, THE TECHNICAL CONTACTS COULD BE ARRANGED THROUGH HARZA. LACK OF DIRECT DISCUSSIONS, HE BELIEVES, COULD LEAD TO SERIOUS INCIDENTS (HE CITED A RECENT PROBLEM WITH SOME KOREAN WORKMEN BUILDING A MAKESHIFT DAM ON THE JORDAN WHICH THE ISRAELIS HAD TO REMOVE) WHICH WOULD JEOPARDIZE THE ENTIRE PROJECT. IN SUMMING UP, ALON SAID "THEY WANT SOMETHING. WE MUST PROTECT OUR INTERESTS. THEY CAN DEPEND ON US...IF THERE IS NO COOPERATION, THERE WILL BE NO WEIR." ONLY IF NEGOTIATIONS GET PAST THE PRESENT HURDLES, ALON SAID, WOULD HE BE PREPARED TO TAKE THE COOPERATION AGREEMENT TO THE CABINET FOR APPROVAL.

5. COMMENT: WHILE SOME OF THE SPECIFICS OF ALON'S PRESENTATION MIGHT BE NEGOTIABLE, HE GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT SOME KIND OF DIRECT ISRAELI-JORDANIAN CONTACT

WOULD BE A SINE QUA NO FOR CONSTRUCTION OF THE WEIR.

6. WHEN ASKED WHETHER HE SAW THE U.S. PLAYING ANY CONTINUING ROLE IN MAQARIN, ALON REPLIED AHT HE DID. HE SAID THAT ISRAEL RECOGNIZED THAT WE WERE AN INTERESTED PARTY AND WOULD KEEP US FULLY INFORMED.

7. ALON WAS HANDED A BRIEF WRITTEN SUMMARY OF U.S. INTENTIONS CONCERNING INCLUSION OF \$50 MILLION FOR MAQARIN IN THE FY79 AID BUDGET (SEE REF C). HE HAD NO COMMENT OTHER THAN TO SAY THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THE TIMING PROBLEM.

8. THE LONG-AWAITED TECHNICAL DATA WHICH ISRAEL PRO-
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MISED TO SUPPLY JORDAN WAS DELIVERED AT THIS MEETING. THIS INCLUDES A 1:10,000 DETAILED MAP OF THE YARMOUK TRANGLE AND WATER SUPPLY INSTALLATION, A YEARLY WATER CONSUMPTION TABLE FOR THE TRIANGLE, AND DATA ON THE PUMPING PLANT BETWEEN AL HAMMAH AND TEL-OR. THE DATA WAS IN HEBREW. A TRANSLATION IS BEING MADE BY THEEMBASSY AND COPIES WILL BE FORWARDED SHORTLY TO AID FOR TAUBENBALTT AND TO EMBASSY AMMAN.
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